

A-Team meeting Conference Call January 24, 2005

Welcome and Roll Call – Due to conference call number mix-up the meeting was delayed for about 20 minutes. Fred Kollmann, NRCS, was the only A-Team member who did not participate in the call. A list of attendees is attached below.

Minutes from November 4 conference call – The minutes were approved as amended by Janet Sternburg. The revised minutes will be distributed.

2005 Budget Status – Roger Perk provided a brief update on the FY 05 budget. It's not quite "final" but it looks to be about \$1 M more than FY 04. The total expected budget is \$17.5 M with \$4.7 M to LTRMP and \$10.3 M to HREP. Savings and slippage was substantially reduced (down to 11.2%) compared to the previous year and was the reason for the overall increase. Roger indicated they should see the President's FY 06 EMP budget on February 2.

A-Team Communications – John Sullivan and Janet Sternburg described past communication problems and expectations for the A-Team. Much of this discussion centered on the recent process for developing and approving Additional Program Element (APE) projects. There was concern that the A-Team was brought in too late on some issues and this resulted in too little time to complete the needed review. There is also a need to clarify what group (A-Team, A-Team member, Field Station Leader) is expected to provide input on LTRM issues when review requests come from UMESC, USCOE or EMPCC. There was general agreement that all partners recognized a need for improved communications within and between agencies and to clarify the input needed from the A-Team. The A-Team does not wish to take an active planning role, but needs to be aware of pertinent technical issues early in order to provide sufficient time for their review.

APE selections for 2005 – Linda Leake provided an update to the selected APE projects for FY05. Thirteen projects have been selected pending further review (January 11 e-mail from Leake). Three projects are "earmarked" (Status and Trends ~\$250 K, Bathymetry ~\$200 K and Equipment Refreshment ~\$57 K), but their budgets have not been finalized. Roughly \$998 K of APE work was identified for FY 05, but only \$ 750 K is available (a shortfall of \$248 K). After discounting the earmarked projects (\$507K), only \$243 K is available to fund the remaining 10 APE projects. The S&T work may be closer to \$200 K. However, there may be a need to use some of the APE funds to help cover 0.5 FTE of web tool development work that had initially been assigned to the Minimal Sustainable Program (MSP). For the most part, the selected projects were those that ranked high on the A-Team prioritization completed in November. Unfortunately, due to the above budget limitations, it will not be possible to complete all selected APE projects.

APE review/selection process for 2006 – Linda Leake indicated that the FY 06 selection process will begin next month. The Corps will provide the initial criteria for project preparation. The goal would be to have the initial list of APE projects ready to be prioritized at the April A-Team meeting. Final study plans would be prepared by September. Individual A-Team members will have an opportunity to comment on specific study plans in areas where they have interest and expertise. A-Team members would identify that interest at April meeting. A-Team members believed this approach was reasonable. Linda Leake

plans to work out a more formal schedule and discuss this with John Sullivan prior to the EMPCC meeting in February.

Questions were raised about APE projects that didn't make the cut for funding for FY 05 – would these be carried forward to FY 06? There was general agreement that these projects could be considered FY 06 if they were still relevant and important, but they would have to be re-prioritized with any new APEs proposed for FY 06. The plan is to place the full list of FY 05 projects on UMESC's LTRM web site so that anyone can refer to them as future APE projects are planned.

Status & Trends Report – Hank DeHann provided the status of the report and the indicator development. Substantial discussion has occurred on the indicator development since the November A-Team meeting. The review has primarily involved the UMESC, USCOE and field stations. Hank indicated there has been some concern expressed that the indicators are “too heavy” for the Upper River. He has also heard an interest in some form of “GAP” analysis and the development of trophic guilds for fish. Hank indicated that they would consider external data (outside LTRM) if the information was readily available and provided relevant information for indicator development. Hank directed folks to consider the criteria for indicator development listed in the Navigation Study – Environmental Study Panel Report. These include policy & management relevance, technical merit and practicality. The emphasis has been to identify the indicators that should go into the S & T report. The actual “targets” for indicators will be developed later pending additional review and evaluation. However, they are accepting targets if sufficient justification and documentation is provided.

Sullivan wondered about the identification of indicators for invertebrates given that this component was dropped from the monitoring component in FY 05. Does this imply we should be reactivating this monitoring component in the future? Hank indicated that other agencies may collect data in the future so the indicator would still have relevance. Sullivan also wondered if there were too many indicators. John Chick suggested that it may be possible to reduce the list if it was determined that some indicators were providing redundant information. Pete Redmon suggested that the UMRCC Water Quality Technical Section has recommended water quality targets (i.e. turbidity, TSS, transparency) to protect SAV.

Only a few A-Team members indicated they would be able to provide comments on the proposed indicators by tomorrow's deadline. As a result, the UMESC and the USCOE agreed to extend the comment period by one week. Comments should be sent to Bob Gaugush, UMESC, by February 1. A-Team members were asked to share their comments with other A-Team members.

EMP 5-Year Strategic Management Plan - Roger indicated they have received considerable comments on the plan and have decided to extend the completion date. They now plan to have it endorsed at the May EMPCC meeting. Due to limited time, we were not able to discuss this plan. John Sullivan suggested that if A-Team members have comments, they should be directed to their agency's EMPCC representative.

Time and Place for next meeting – April 26, 2005 at La Crosse. This precedes the Mississippi River Consortium meeting. The time place will be determined later.

Pete Redmon announced that he will be retiring on April 1 – no fooling! He is working on finding an A-Team replacement from EPA. Pete has been with the A-Team for at least 10 years. We will be sorry to see you go Pete!

Prepared by: John Sullivan, A-Team Chair

Conference Call Participants –

John Sullivan, WDNR
Janet Sternburg, MoDOC
Kevin Stauffer, MN
John Pitlo, IA
Mike Steuck, IA
Rob Maher, IL

Pete Redmon, EPA
Tim Yager, USFWS
Roger Perk, USCOE
Hank DeHaan, USCOE
Sandra Brewer, USCOE
Dan Wilcox, USCOE
T.J. Miller, USCOE
Linda Leake, USGS
Pat Heglund, USGS
Barry Johnson, USGS
Jennie Sauer, USGS
Jeff Houser, USGS

Terry Dukerschein, WDNR
Robert Hrabik, MoDOC
Walt Popp, MNDNR
John Chick, ILNHS
Mark Pegg, ILNHS
Dan Kirby, IADNR